

FISCAL NOTE

HB 247 - SB 734

April 12, 2001

SUMMARY OF BILL: Requires each school district to meet the following guidelines when transporting either special needs children or medically fragile children:

1. Vehicles purchased after July 31, 2000, must be equipped with working air conditioners and heaters when children are at risk for health problems due to extreme temperatures;
2. Personnel must receive training to address general and specific health and safety concerns and procedures to follow in the event of an emergency;
3. There must be clearly stated policies and procedures for responding to various health and safety situations or emergencies;
4. Vehicles must be equipped with, or have immediate access to, two-way radios, cellular phones or other means of communication;
5. Vehicles must be equipped with basic first aid kits and supplies; and
6. Transportation must be arranged so that special needs or medically fragile children do not have longer than a one-hour ride on each trip.

Present law requires that the driver and another person must check vehicles used for transporting disabled students at the end of every route to ensure that no children are left on the vehicle.

ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT:

Increase State Expenditures -	\$2,125,800 FY03-04 \$433,800 FY04-05
Increase Local Govt. Expenditures* -	\$964,000 Recurring \$3,760,000 One-Time
Increase Local Govt. Revenues -	\$2,125,800 FY03-04 \$433,800 FY04-05

Estimate assumes:

1. There are approximately 800 special education school buses in Tennessee ranging in size from passenger vans up to medium size buses.
2. Approximately 50% of all special education school buses purchased have air conditioning. Approximately 60 special needs buses are purchased each year. Assumes that after July 31, 2000, all 60 buses will be required to be air conditioned, that would not have been air conditioned in absence of the bill, at a cost of \$4,000 to \$7,000 each. Assuming an average cost of \$4,500 for each bus, local expenditures are estimated to increase approximately \$270,000 each year. In addition, the cost of air conditioning maintenance on each bus is estimated to be \$300 per year or \$18,000 per year for all 60 buses. *This estimate assumes that existing special education school buses will not be required to be retrofitted with air conditioning.*

3. Training costs are estimated to be *minimal*, since the Department of Safety already provides this service.
4. Costs for developing policies and procedures are estimated to be *minimal*.
5. Assumes that the majority of special needs buses are presently equipped or have immediate access to two-way radios, cellular phones or other means of communicating with school or emergency medical services in case of a health or safety emergency or situation. Therefore, any additional communication cost is estimated to be *not significant*. For information purposes, the cost to install a two-way radio on a bus is \$600.
6. Since the state already requires school buses to carry first aid kits, the cost of this requirement is estimated to be *minimal*.
7. The current ride limit for students per trip is 1 and 1/2 hours. Assuming that 25% of special needs buses are en route for 1 and 1/2 hours, schools would need to purchase an estimated 80 additional buses to reduce all bus rides to no more than one hour as required in the bill. At an average cost of \$47,000 each, the additional cost to purchase buses is estimated to be approximately \$3,760,000. The cost to hire 80 drivers for these additional buses is estimated to be approximately \$640,000.
8. An increase in expenditures in FY01-02 by local school systems for transportation results in an estimated increase in state funds generated by the BEP formula for transportation beginning in FY03-04.

*Article II, Section 24 of the Tennessee Constitution provides that: *no law of general application shall impose increased expenditure requirements on cities or counties unless the General Assembly shall provide that the state share in the cost.*

CERTIFICATION:

This is to duly certify that the information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.



James A. Davenport, Executive Director